

# Eurasia

For other uses, see [Eurasia \(disambiguation\)](#).

“Eurasian” redirects here. For people of mixed European and Asian ancestry, see [Eurasian \(mixed ancestry\)](#).

**Eurasia** is the combined continental landmass of



*Eurasia with surrounding areas of [Africa](#) and [Australasia](#) visible*



*Afro-Eurasian aspect of [Earth](#)*

[Europe](#) and [Asia](#).<sup>[1][2][3]</sup> The term is a portmanteau of its two constituents. Located primarily in the Northern and Eastern Hemispheres, it is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, the Pacific Ocean to the east, the Arctic Ocean to the north, and by Africa, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Indian Ocean to the south.<sup>[4]</sup> The division between Europe and Asia as two different continents is a historical and cultural construct, with no

clear physical separation between them; thus, in some parts of the world, Eurasia is recognized as the largest of five or six continents.<sup>[3]</sup>

Eurasia covers around 55,000,000 square kilometres (21,000,000 sq mi), or around 36.2% of the [Earth's](#) total land area. The landmass contains around 5.0 billion people, equating to approximately 70% of the [human population](#). Humans first settled in Eurasia between 60,000 and 125,000 years ago. Some island countries, including the [United Kingdom](#), [Ireland](#), [Iceland](#), [Japan](#), and [Indonesia](#), are included under the popular definition of Eurasia, in spite of being separate from the massive landmass.

## 1 Overview

Physiographically, Eurasia is a single continent.<sup>[3]</sup> The concepts of [Europe](#) and [Asia](#) as distinct continents date back to antiquity and their borders are geologically arbitrary, with the [Ural](#) and [Caucasus](#) ranges being the main delimiters between the two. Eurasia is connected to [Africa](#) at the [Suez Canal](#), and Eurasia is sometimes combined with Africa as the supercontinent [Afro-Eurasia](#).<sup>[5]</sup> Due to the vast landmass and differences in latitude, Eurasia exhibits all types of climate under the [Köppen classification](#) – including the harshest types of hot and cold temperatures, high and low precipitation and various types of nature.

## 2 History

Main article: [History of Eurasia](#)

Further information: [Foreign interactions with Europe](#)

Eurasia has been the host of many ancient civilizations, including those based in [Mesopotamia](#), the [Indus Valley](#) and [China](#). In the [Axial Age](#) (mid-First Millennium BC) a continuous belt of civilizations stretching through the Eurasian subtropical zone from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This belt became the mainstream of world history for two millennia.

Through this belt passed the famous [Silk Road](#) which symbolizes trade and cultural exchange linking Eurasian cultures through history and has been an increasingly popular topic. Over recent decades the idea of a greater [Eurasian history](#) has developed with the aim of investigating the genetic, cultural and [linguistic](#) relationships

between European and Asian cultures of antiquity, which had long been considered distinct.

### 3 Geology

Main article: [Laurasia](#)

Eurasia formed 375 to 325 million years ago with the merging of [Siberia](#) (once a separate continent), [Kazakhstania](#), and [Baltica](#), which was joined to [Laurentia](#), now North America, to form [Euramerica](#). Chinese [cratons](#) collided with Siberia's southern coast.

### 4 Geopolitics

Originally, "Eurasia" is a geographical notion: in this sense, it is simply the biggest continent; the combined landmass of Europe and Asia. However, geopolitically, the word has several different meanings, reflecting the specific geopolitical interests of each nation.<sup>[6]</sup> "Eurasia" is one of the most important geopolitical concepts; as [Zbigniew Brzezinski](#) observed:

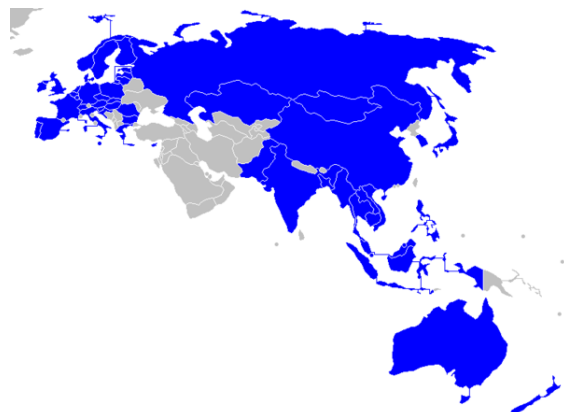
"... how America "manages" Eurasia is critical. A power that dominates "Eurasia" would control two of the world's three most advanced and economically productive regions. A mere glance at the map also suggests that control over "Eurasia" would almost automatically entail Africa's subordination, rendering the Western Hemisphere and Oceania geopolitically peripheral to the world's central continent. About 75 per cent of the world's people live in "Eurasia", and most of the world's physical wealth is there as well, both in its enterprises and underneath its soil. "Eurasia" accounts for about three-fourths of the world's known energy resources."<sup>[7]</sup>

In the widest possible sense, the geopolitical definition of "Eurasia" is consistent with its geographical area. This is sometimes the way the word is understood in countries located at the fringes of, or outside, this area, and it is generally what is meant by "Eurasia" in political circles (see [Zbigniew Brzezinski](#)) in the USA, Japan and India.

In Western Europe when political scientists talk about "Eurasia", they generally mean Russia (including Ukraine) integrated into Europe, economically, politically, and even militarily. Since Napoleon, European strategists have understood the importance of allying with Russia, and the potential consequences of failing to do so. At the moment one of the most prominent projects of European Union is [Russia - EU Four Common Spaces Initiative](#). A political and economic union of former

Soviet states named the [Eurasian Union](#) is scheduled for establishment in 2015, similar in concept to the [European Union](#). As of 2014 neither encompasses all states within Eurasia.

The Russian concept of "Eurasia" is very different from the European one. It is a view that has older roots than the European one - not surprisingly, considering Russia's geographic position. Russian politologists traditionally view Russia itself, being both European and Asian, as "Eurasian." The geopolitical area of the Russian concept of "Eurasia" corresponded initially more or less to the land area of Imperial Russia in 1914, including parts of Eastern Europe.<sup>[8]</sup> There is undeniably an influence of Pan Slavism in this definition; originally the idea of "Eurasia" was more romantically rooted in natural geography. It was the idea that the people scattered across the land called "Eurasia" shared common spiritual values due to its geographic traits, such as a flat land with few coastlines but important rivers, a particular climate (continental, often harshly so), and a certain landscape (steppe, taiga, tundra). This idea was more or less realised, but with difficulty, during the last phases of the Russian Empire and was then realised again with the Soviet Union after 1945, though not stably enough for enduring success. Today, though this Russian geopolitical interest still exists, the physical area of the Russian "Eurasia" is now more realistically assessed. The Russian view today is that "Eurasia" consists of the land lying between Europe and Asia proper; namely, those made up of Western and Central Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, part of Caucasus, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan (see [Eurasian Economic Union](#)). Just as in the case of the European concept of "Eurasia," the Russian version of "Eurasia" is a geopolitical interest that underpins foreign policy in that part of the world. Thus, it is not surprising that today one of Russia's main geopolitical interests lies in ever closer integration with those countries that it considers part of "Eurasia."<sup>[9]</sup>



Members of the [ASEM](#)

Every two years since 1996 a meeting of most Asian and European countries is organised as the [Asia-Europe Meeting \(ASEM\)](#).

## 5 Use of term

### 5.1 History of the Europe and Asia division

In ancient times, the **Greeks** classified Europe (derived from the mythological **Phoenician** princess Europa) and Asia (derived from **Asia**, a woman in **Greek mythology**) as separate “lands”. Where to draw the dividing line between the two regions is still a matter of discussion. Especially whether the **Kuma-Manych Depression** or the **Caucasus Mountains** form the southeast boundary is disputed, since **Mount Elbrus** would be part of Europe in the latter case, making it (and not **Mont Blanc**) Europe’s highest mountain. Most accepted is probably the boundary as defined by **Philip Johan von Strahlenberg** in the 18th century. He defined the dividing line along the Aegean Sea, Dardanelles, Sea of Marmara, Bosphorus, Black Sea, Kuma–Manych Depression, Caspian Sea, Ural River, and Ural Mountains.



*Eurasian world for eurasianist political movement*



*Single markets in European and post Soviet countries; European Economic Area and Common Economic Space*

### 5.2 Anthropology and genetics

In modern usage, the term “Eurasian” is a demonym usually meaning “of or relating to Eurasia” or “a native or inhabitant of Eurasia”.<sup>[10]</sup>

The term “Eurasian” is also used to describe people of combined “Asian” and “European” descent.

West or western Eurasia is a loose geographic definition used in some disciplines, such as **genetics** or **anthropology**, to refer to the region historically and linguistically inhabited by the relatively homogeneous population of **West Asia** (**Ancient Near East**). The people of this region are sometimes described collectively as **West** or **Western Eurasians**.<sup>[11]</sup>

### 5.3 Geography

Located primarily in the **eastern** and **northern hemispheres**, Eurasia is considered a supercontinent, part of the supercontinent of **Afro-Eurasia** or simply a continent in its own right.<sup>[12]</sup> In plate tectonics, the Eurasian Plate includes Europe and most of Asia but not the Indian subcontinent, the Arabian Peninsula or the area of the Russian Far East east of the Chersky Range.

### 5.4 Post-Soviet countries

*Eurasia* is also sometimes used in geopolitics to refer to organizations of or affairs concerning the post-Soviet states, in particular, Russia, the Central Asian republics, and the Transcaucasian republics. A prominent example of this usage is in the name of the Eurasian Economic Community, the organization includ-

ing **Kazakhstan**, Russia, and some of their neighbors, and headquartered in **Moscow**, Russia, and **Astana**, the capital of Kazakhstan.

The word “Eurasia” is often used in Kazakhstan to describe its location. Numerous Kazakh institutions have the term in their names, like the L. N. Gumilev Eurasian National University (Kazakh: Л. Н. Гумилёв атындағы Еуразия Ұлттық университеті; Russian: Евразийский Национальный университет имени Л. Н. Гумилёва)<sup>[13]</sup> (Lev Gumilev's Eurasianism ideas having been popularized in Kazakhstan by Olzhas Suleimenov), the Eurasian Media Forum,<sup>[14]</sup> the Eurasian Cultural Foundation (Russian: Евразийский фонд культуры), the Eurasian Development Bank (Russian: Евразийский банк развития),<sup>[15]</sup> and the Eurasian Bank.<sup>[16]</sup> In 2007 Kazakhstan's President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, proposed building a "Eurasia Canal" to connect the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea via Russia's Kuma-Manych Depression in order to provide Kazakhstan and other Caspian-basin countries with a more efficient path to the ocean than the existing Volga-Don Canal.<sup>[17]</sup> This usage is comparable to how Americans use "Western Hemisphere" to describe concepts and organizations dealing with the Americas (e.g., Council on Hemispheric Affairs, Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation).

## 6 See also

- Asia-Europe Foundation
- Asia–Europe Meeting
- Borders of the continents
- Eurasia (Nineteen Eighty-Four)

- Eurasian (disambiguation)
- Eurasian Economic Community
- Eurasian Union
- Intermediate Region
- Laurasia, a geological supercontinent joining Eurasia and North America.
- List of Eurasian countries by population
- List of supercontinents
- Neo-Eurasianism
- Palearctic
- Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
- Vega expedition, the first voyage to circumnavigate Eurasia
- Eurasianism

## 7 References

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- [2] Nield, Ted. “Continental Divide”. *Geological Society*. Retrieved 2012-08-08.
- [3] “How many continents are there?”. National Geographic Society. Retrieved 2010-09-26. By convention there are seven continents: Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe, Australia, and Antarctica. Some geographers list only six continents, combining Europe and Asia into Eurasia. In parts of the world, students learn that there are just five continents: Eurasia, Australia, Africa, Antarctica, and the Americas.
- [4] “What is Eurasia?”. *geography.about.com*. Retrieved 17 December 2012.
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- [16] “Eurasian Bank”. *Eurasian-bank.kz*. Retrieved 2010-08-07.
- [17] Canal will link Caspian Sea to world (The Times, June 29, 2007)

## 8 External links

Coordinates: 50°N 80°E﻿ / ﻿50°N 80°E﻿ / 50; 80



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